

LEVERHULME TRUST - STUDY ABROAD STUDENTSHIP FINAL REPORT 01/2003-04/2005

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Part I

1. Summary of research/course of studies

Please provide a summary of no more than 1500 words in non-technical language outlining what you have achieved during your award and assessing the progress of your research or programme of study in comparison to your original proposal, and detailing any changes in objectives, procedures or locations.

The research period began in January 2003, following a gap of 6 months since acceptance onto the Media Lab UIAH Helsinki Doctoral programme. The following text is a summary from that beginning until the start of April 2005, arranged into the key thematic achievements.

1a. Operating within an emerging media arts field

When the original research proposal was made in April 2002, the proposed engagement was based on the potential of emerging mobile technologies in creative application (with reference to preceding media art installations, technology 'white papers' and industry reports). It aimed to consolidate and merge together my creative practices with my theoretical and communitarian interests.

In the meantime that spanned the period of my Leverhulme Trust Study Abroad Studentship, there has been a rich wealth of documented international activity and projects online in proposed emerging field above, increasingly identified within the realm of media arts, under the terms of 'mobile art' and 'locative' media. "Locative media may be understood to mean media in which context is crucial, in that the media pertains to specific location and time, the point of spatio-temporal 'capture', dissemination or some point in between." (author, written 2004). The term 'locative media' initially appeared at the Acoustic Space Reader (Published by the RIXC Center for New Media Culture, 2003), as a tentative category for new media art that sought to explore the intersection of the virtual space of the Internet with the physical space of the urban (or non-urban) environment, that attempted to distinguished from the corporate discourse in location based services (LBS). The term locative media has also over the last year or so been associated with mobility, collaborative mapping, and emergent forms of social networking. To accompany this rise, there has been an increasing network of people to communicate with, international festivals, seminars and workshops, and academic discourse developing around the field.

One of the main achievements of my research during the financial support of the Studentship has been to be able to attend and contribute to the local (Finnish), regional (Baltic) and international (European and Australian) development of this emerging field of mobile arts and locative media. In-other-words, attending events, making presentations, sustaining conversations, and on multiple occasions, leading and organising workshop events.

My identification and collaboration with a key supporter of this emerging field - RIXC Centre for New Media Culture in Riga (rixc.org) - has brought important cultural (more than academic) credibility and encouragement to my research progress. Support from the Nordic Institute for Contemporary Arts has also helped to interface and place my research within the context of contemporary art practice: understanding the in/direct involvement and interaction with people (as participants and as audience) to be a key aspect of the artistic (socially-engaged) work/process.

Following the previous 2.5 years of activities, under the support of the Leverhulme Trust, I am now represented internationally as a specialist practitioner and researcher in the combined field of locative/mobile media and socially-engaged arts.

1b. Developing academic overlaps and cross-disciplinary approaches

Further, I have also attended to different academic and educational environments which can contribute to this specialised combination of approaches. The flexible doctoral study environment of the University of Art and Design Helsinki has meant that I could attend lectures and seminars in urban studies, semiotics, narratology, postmodern theatre and ethnography, within other Helsinki educational institutions and beyond in the city of Tampere. This educational opportunity, and additional travel outwith Finland to academic conferences and cultural centres, has meant that I have also learned about parallel and relevant discourses/ practices, such as contemporary archaeology, and socially-engaged activism. Excursions off the focused path have proved more than useful to help formulate the space in which my research is to be situated, and to recognise the dynamic and specific positions or contributions that can also be made in more established disciplines.

Hence, to identify another achievement of the scholarship period, is my active involvement in raising awareness of relevant and preceding discourses to the emerging media arts field that I have been part of, seeking to critically question or problematise nascent practices, metaphors or discourse omissions. The main manifestation of this achievement so far has been the design and production of a international 'Locative Media' Workshop event for the PixelACHE Helsinki Festival in March-April 2004. This successfully acclaimed event involved a mix of artists, activists, performance and archaeology /material culture researchers. To cultivate further connections between the cultural/academic disciplines, I have strategically

situated the documentation of the event within the context of 'Archaeologies of the Contemporary Past' academic research, hosted on Michael Shank's wiki platform at Stanford University [ed: Since 2015, offline].

1c. Practice-led Collaborations

The past two years have dramatically changed my creative practice into one which involves, to a large degree, collaborations, both interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary, and the involvement of other people as participants in the process. Two examples of this collaborative practice are the 'Aware' project/platform, and the 'Mapmyths' project, both key activities within my practice-led research; indeed, sources of key case-study events within my forthcoming thesis text.

Aware [<http://aware.uiah.fi>] [ed: Since 2006, offline]

'Aware' collective was initiated by John Evans, Markus Ort, Aki-Ville Pöykiö and myself, within the innovative media culture and educational environment of Helsinki. The collective maintains progressive cross-disciplinary approaches to socially-engaged arts, interaction and participatory design, mobile technology development, creative/commercial -research partnerships, and pedagogical workshops. We are variously involved, and have represented Finland at various international media arts events and workshops in the Netherlands, Latvia, UK and Australia.

The 'Aware' platform is a design tool and a production environment. It allows for collective publication and syndication of mobile media. The focus is upon relations between objective and subjective contextual information, such as proximity, location, temporality, theme and event. Important strategies are: working from the lowest common technological denominator to maintain flexibility and inclusiveness; open-source solutions within propriety networks; human relationships and experience; context and situatedness. The platform has been generously supported from the beginning by the Media Lab, University of Art and Design Helsinki.

'Aware' projects have examined both the roles of participant and audience within the field of mobile media-based practices. Recent experience with the platform has focused on co-ordinating workshops and doing practice-led research, investigating how social groups use media devices with media-capture capabilities, asking questions such as: how/why they might use them; what we could build or do, that would enhance or extend the social aspects of these groups.

Mapmyths a.k.a. Mapping and Sewing Together Mythologies [<http://mapmyths.rixc.lv>]

[ed: Since 2015, offline at this url, alt: <http://mlab.uiah.fi/~apaterso/projects/mapmyths/>]

The 'Mapmyths' project is an ongoing collaboration initiated by Signe Pucena and myself. The current stage of the project interweaves cross-cultural and deeply local experiences from Karosta -Latvia, and Inari-Ivalo - Finnish Lapland. The activity is inspired by the specific acoustic and cultural environments found there. We are interested in stories, personal narratives, mythologies and songs that people use to describe or show a sense of shared, common and collective memory to others, in relation to the environment in which they are situated.

The project touches upon ethnographic fieldwork craft and situated narratives, with aims to elaborate tangible representations, appropriate means of feedback interfaces to encourage poly-vocality, and present the project in the local environmental contexts where the media was gathered. The project has been presented at a seminar within the NEURO Networking event in Munich, Germany, and supported with EU Culture2000 funds awarded to RIXC Centre for New Media, Riga, and K@2 Cultural Centre, Karosta. Platform support is provided-in-kind by the Multimedia Institute, Zagreb -Croatia.

The most recent outcome of this project was an exhibition and ethno-folk concert in September 2004, back in Karosta -Latvia, the community where the story-gathering and making began. Near-future developments include: Inclusion of reflective hometown 'chapters' related to ourselves as authors, from Latvia and Scotland respectively; the translation of text into Russian, in preparation of a new journey to St. Petersburg at the end of November.

1d. Adjustments and doctoral development

My development of approach and research imagination has expanded within local and international networks, but particularly: beyond Helsinki, to include the Baltic Sea region; beyond the academic and education environment, to include spaces of artistic and applied design in the context of socially-engaged and cultural activism. During these adjustments, the formation of research stance has been an iterative process. It has included personal engagement with new technologies and practices of usage, for certain agendas or projects goals. It has been guided by critical reflexivity: identifying research approaches, questions or omissions in the discourse.

The focus of attention has adjusted over time away from technological factors towards experience, social design and human sustainability. Communication and pedagogical models are now important, including workshop events as the main investigative research model. Like-wise, identifying inter-related aspects of tools, actors, community, organization and outcomes in the workshop/fieldwork activity.

1e. Challenges and obstacles

As commented upon in the interim report, the hardest and most challenging part of the last 2 year process has been finding the appropriate balance between practical/production activities (collaborations, workshops etc.), attending academic seminars and lectures and theoretical development, i.e. reading, writing and thinking. There are few guidelines to follow in an emerging field, especially taking a practice-led and artistic approach to research activity and understanding methodologies. However this obstacle has been manageable with good faith and support from supervisors, interested near/far actors in the environments of engagement, peer artists and researchers. Everything becomes clear with effort, sustained passion, and remembering your own path after each deviation away from it.

Doing this at the same time as travelling frequently (due to successful projects, workshop or conference attendance, personal life) while maintaining personal and professional conversations with peers elsewhere, both in presence and via remote communications, all have an affect. The affect has been upon my own local and social integration, including my lack of Finnish language development, and trying to make a sustainable personal life in Helsinki. However this is a balance which is set by one's own individual choices, and so I take responsibility for that. I now take advantage of my good fortune, and current stability, to consolidate friendships and connections made during these years of support.

2. Output

List any publications which have already appeared, been accepted for publication or are to be submitted for publication. Please give provisional or definite publication dates, and also give details of any other way in which you intend to disseminate the results of the research, e.g. lectures, seminars, exhibitions

Due to the nature of the practice-led research activity, publications have not been the main output, as focus has been directed towards coordinating workshops, however the following below are presented as recognised local and international outputs.

Workshops/Pedagogical outputs

- Oslo -Norway, *AWARE: LYDHOER Workshop*, involving 5 local media art academy students. Co-produced with John Evans and Kunsthøgskolen, 02.2005
- Sydney -Australia, *AWARE: SHARED MOBILE EXPERIENCE(S)* Master-Class, involving 10 local and established artists and researchers, Co-produced with John Evans and 'dLux Media Arts' Centre, 01.2005
- Helsinki -Finland, *AWARE: RENGU Workshop*, involving 5 local multi-disciplinary university students. Co-produced with John Evans, 'ISEA: wireless experience' Symposium, 08.2004

- Daugavpils -Latvia, *AWARE: KADREEJUMS* Workshop, involving 10 local photography art students. Co-produced with John Evans and 'Kultūras Dizaina Aģentūra' cultural organisation, 06.2004
- Helsinki -Finland, *LOCATIVE MEDIA: RAUTATIEASEMA* Workshop, involving 25 international multi-disciplinary artist and researchers. Co-produced with 'Piknik Frequency Ry' cultural organisation, PixelACHE Festival, 03.2004
- Middlesbrough -England, *AWARE: STORYBOARD* Workshop, involving 4 local multi-disciplinary college students. Co-produced with John Evans and 'Animex International Festival for Animation' organisation, 01.2004

Exhibitions/Installations

- Helsinki -Finland, *AWARE: ISEA* Stall-installation. Co-produced with John Evans, Markus Ort, ISEA Wireless Experience Symposium, 08.2004
- Karosta-Liepaja -Latvia, *MAPMYTHS: MIITSKIE MEZGLOJUMI* Exhibition and concert. Co-produced with Signe Pucena, Gallery 'K. Maklsa?', 09-10.2004
- Amsterdam -Netherlands, *AWARE: ECULTURE* Stall-installation. Co-produced with John Evans, Markus Ort, Aki-Ville Pöykiö, E-Culture Fair, Paradiso, 10.2003
- Helsinki -Finland, *AWARE: INTERACTIVE AUDIOVISUAL NARRATIVE* Stall-installation. Co-produced with John Evans, Markus Ort, Aki-Ville Pöykiö, Media Lab Demo Day, UIAH, 10.2003

Invited presentations

- Sydney -Australia, *BEING AWARE IN OPEN AND PROPRIETARY CONDITIONS* Presentation (45mins) with John Evans and attendance to the Mobile Journeys Professionals Forum, Chauvel Cinema, 02.2005
- Riga -Latvia, *TCM: LOCATIVE MEDIA WORKSHOP* Panel presentation (15mins) and attendance to Art+Communication: trans-cultural mapping Festival, 10.2004
- Helsinki -Finland, *AWARE: RENGO* Co-performance presentation (as guided tour/walk, 1hr) co-produced with John Evans, workshop participants, and small-group of audience-members, as part of 'ISEA: wireless experience' Conference, 08.2004
- München -Germany, *MAPPING AND SEWING TOGETHER MYTHOLOGIES* Panel presentation in context of feminist migrant labour issues, (15mins), NEURO networking Europe Event, Muffathalle, 02.2004

Publications

- Forthcoming (working title): "Regeneration and Recovery in Locative and Socially-engaged Attention", Essay written for Martin Rieser, towards publication in *The Mobile Audience*, ??, 2005
- Forthcoming (working title): "Aware: rengo workshop represented as performance", Essay written for Martin Rieser, towards publication in *The Mobile Audience*, ??, 2005
- "Re-presentations of the Locative Media Workshop.PixelACHE2004" Wiki pages generated for *Archaeologies of the Contemporary Past* project page, presented on <http://metamedia.stanford.edu> server, including rearranged 'Negotiating Rautatieasema' creative text, (not peer reviewed), 06.2005
- "Negotiating Rautatieasema", In *Acoustic Space issue#5: Trans Cultural Mapping*, Marc Tuters and Rasa Smite, eds. (RIXC, Riga 2004), 09.2004

- "Mapping Narratives and Fieldwork", In *Acoustic Space issue#5: Trans Cultural Mapping*, Marc Tuters and Rasa Smite, eds. (RIXC, Riga 2004), 09.2004
- "RAM4: Open Source Architecture Performance", Documentation essay with Adam Somlai-Fischer, Usman Haque, Margot Jacobs and Ophra Wolf, written for *NIFCA Magazine #1/04*, 11.2003

3. Other Activities

Give details of any academic activities such as field trips, conferences, teaching carried out, examinations taken etc. Give details of any teaching, involvement in conferences, working groups, societies or associations etc.

Activity: 2005

March

- Awarded NIFCA Sleipnir travel grant for 'Øresund Conversations' project to engage on a series of research journeys to Malmö/Copenhagen exploring and activating conversational relationships between socially-engaged art and participatory media practices
- Attendance to 'Application of Activity Theory in the Design Research Process' Lecture in Doctoral Seminar by Lily Diaz-Kommonen, Media Lab UIAH, Helsinki -Finland.

February-May

- Attendance to 'Approaches to Narrativity' lecture series by Massimo Berruti, at Institute of Art Research, University of Helsinki, Helsinki -Finland, (10x2hrs).

January [duration not supported by Leverhulme Trust]

- Marrickville Artist Residency with John Evans, Petersham Town Hall, Sydney -Australia, (30 days).
- Seminar presentation (1hr) and consultancy with John Evans of 'Aware' platform for Nic Ridge and Rachel Wilson (RMIT) related to planned community media project, School of Applied Communication at RMIT, Melbourne -Australia, (2 days).
- Seminar presentation with John Evans of 'Aware' platform (2hrs) at Interaction Design Dept. of University of Queensland, Brisbane -Australia, (1 day).

Activity: 2004

October

- Attendance to 'Writer's Workshop for Spatial Thinkers' Seminar workshop led by Lisa Hirte-Muszynski, Media Lab UIAH, Helsinki -Finland, (1 day). Related essay (Paters04e 11.04).

June-August

- Co-ordination and co-production with John Evans of 'Aware: rengo' Workshop involving multi-disciplinary student group as part of ISEA Wireless Experience Workshop programme, (20 days over 2 months). Details of production (Paters04g 12.04).

April-June [duration not supported by Leverhulme Trust]

- Awarded NICFA Media Artist Residency at RIXC Centre for New Media Culture for 2 months, Riga -Latvia, (60 days).
- Continued fieldwork for 'Mapmyths' project in Karosta, (14 days).

- Participation in 'RAM5: open source media architecture' Workshop, contributing to discussion/development of Locative:packet, Riga -Latvia, (3 days).

January-March

- Interim Report written for Leverhulme Trust Study Abroad Studentship. Report (Paters04a 03.04).

February

- Implementation of 'Mapmyths' project from HTML to TamTam wiki platform, with support from Aleksander Erkalovic, Multimedia Institute Mi2 Lab, Zagreb -Croatia

January

- Attendance to 'Mobilutopia/Locative Media' Seminar discussion at Transmediale Media Arts Festival, Berlin -Germany, (2 days).

Activity: 2003

December

- 'InariChapter' fieldwork with Signe Pucena for Mapmyths project in Inari/Ivalo, Lapland -Finland. (7 days).
- Presentation of 'Aware' platform (10mins) during Media Lab UIAH Demo Day, Helsinki -Finland.
- Attendance to 'Theoretical Archaeology Group' Conference, Lampeter, Wales -UK, (2 days).

November

- Participation in 'RAM4: survival kit' Workshop, Helsinki -Finland, (6 days). Collaboration with Open Source Architecture Performance group.
- Attendance to 'Post Modern Theatre' Lecture series held by Knut Ove Arntzen, Theatre Academy, Helsinki -Finland, (3 days).
- Attendance to 'Ethnography and Gender' Lecture held by Amanda Coffey, Social Science department, Tampere University -Finland, (1 day). Related essay (Paters04b 04.04).

October

- Doctoral Seminar presentation reflecting upon fieldwork process in Karosta for 'Mapmyths' project, Media Lab UIAH, Helsinki -Finland, (1hr).

September

- Attendance to 'Next 5 Minutes International Festival of Tactical Media', Amsterdam -Netherlands, (2 days).
- Attendance to 'Good, Bad, Irrelevant' Conference, UIAH, Helsinki -Finland, (2 days).
- Updated and restructured online presence.

July

- Participant in 'Locative Media Workshop', K@2 Cultural Centre, Karosta -Latvia, (10 days).
- Began 'KarostaChapter' fieldwork and collaboration with Signe Pucena in Karosta -Latvia, (5 days).
- Initial development and collaboration with Jo Walsh on 'Locative:packet design', (2 days).
- Presentation with Signe Pucena of 'Mapping and Sewing Together Mythologies' fieldwork activity, (20 mins).

May

- Attendance to 'Art+Communication: media architecture' Festival, Riga -Latvia, (3 days).

April

- Doctoral Seminar Presentation of Research Abstract, Media Lab UIAH, Helsinki -Finland, (1hr).
- Participant in 'Mobile Gaming SAGAS Writing Interactive Fiction' Workshop, Hochschule für Fernsehen und Film, München -Germany, (6 days).
- Participant in Narrative Logics Workshop held by Maureen Thomas, Media Lab UIAH, Helsinki -Finland, (5 days).

February-April

- Construction of online presence for documentation of research process.
- Attendance to 'Rethinking Space' multi-disciplinary lecture series, organised by Sari Tähtinen, Dept. of Semiotics, University of Helsinki, Helsinki -Finland, (12x1.5hr lectures). Lecture diary (Paters03a 02-04.03). Related essay (Paters03b 06.03).
- Participant in 'MA Interactive Audio-Visual Narrative Production' Course held by Mika Tuomola and Teijo Pellinen, Media Lab UIAH, Helsinki -Finland. Began collaboration with Aki-Ville Pöykiö, John Evans, and Markus Ort on Aware concept production project, (approx 160hrs+).

January

- Began doctoral research process at Media Lab UIAH, Helsinki -Finland.
- Updated knowledge of research field since Doctoral application.
- Visit to 'Social Computing' Research Group, Swedish Institute of Computer Science, Stockholm -Sweden.

4. Future plans

Brief details of your future plans upon the expiry of your award.

The forthcoming stage of the doctoral thesis development is positive. Enough practical work has now been completed, within the period of Leverhulme Study Abroad Scholarship, to offer ample case studies and events to weave among in the different theories and discourses involved. The development of a viable structure that can incorporate the diversity of sources and formats integral to the study is, at this time of writing, the next stage of the process.

Full-time research sustenance has been successfully secured until June 2006, under a local Finnish artistic-research framework (Urban Space Experience Design research group, coordinated by M-Cult, hosted at Helsinki Institute for Information Technologies) by which time it is the aim to have all relevant academic credits completed, and a textual thesis manuscript near complete.

Two discursive projects this Autumn 2005 and Spring 2006 will contribute to the research thesis formulation:

The “*Øresund Conversations*” Seminar(s) will explore and activate relationships between socially-engaged art and participatory media practices in Malmö and Copenhagen. These two fields share concerns such as a regard for social issues and 'site' conditions, sustainability, and the role of presence and familiarity. The aim of the journeys and outcome seminar(s) are to develop conversations with and between these communities of practice.

The “*Locative Media:rautatieasema returns*” Workshop aims to re-engage with the Central Railway Station site in Helsinki, within the recurring context of the PixelACHE Festival, April 2006. Acknowledging the recent contemporary past, and starting with what happened last time in 2004, this return focuses activity to devised performance, ethnographic, storytelling and interpretative approaches, reiterations and representations.

The original aim of the doctoral research proposal was to lead towards social and community engagement outwith the academic and media culture/festival context. It is my continued aim to produce knowledge and experience which can be applied in the context of cultural non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Kuda.org in Novi Sad -Serbia, and K@2 Cultural Centre, Karosta -Latvia, are interesting examples of where to apply energy in useful directions. I am currently looking ahead, and considering options to follow this ambition in 2006-2007, with potential work experience in cultural centres outside of Finland. In the nearby Baltic Sea region (to complete a smooth doctoral closure/evaluation process), for example: Latvia, Denmark or Baltic Poland.

Part II

1. Place of tenure

Please give your frank opinion about the institution to which you were attached for your award, including any problems encountered. You may wish to include details of the following: access to and quality of library, computing and other facilities, support and supervision received from the academic staff.

The University of Art and Design (UIAH) is the largest art and design academy in the Nordic region, and an international leader in post-graduate research. The Media Lab of UIAH, where I have been associated as a Doctoral student, contributes strongly to this leading international position in media design, digital cultural heritage and interactive narrative production. One of its key strengths are the multi-disciplinary and highly professional standard of the students, making it an ideal educational environment for collaborative and team-orientated production work.

It is also the most international of all departments of UIAH, with the most foreign students and researchers, and also uniquely where the majority of the courses in English language are situated. As an extremely well resourced department of the school, it has excellent access and support in regards to technology and equipment. In my own experience, the 'Aware' project/platform has in particular benefited immensely from such support, being one of the few non-affiliated project/research groups in the Media Lab which is given full access to continuous operation of 2 servers on the network. This is unusual support, and says much for the support given by the head of department and the technical administrators to successful projects.

Library facilities as a student of UIAH are excellent, and includes Helsinki-wide institution access to other libraries, for example the University of Helsinki network, the Theatre Academy and Fine Arts Academy. In general the whole Finnish educational system is good and flexible, allowing access to study in other institutions and other courses by making pre-study agreements.

The Media Lab's teaching focus, and conceptual focus has shifted over the years to include less critical media arts and culture studies. This has not suited my interests completely, and so I have had to find such knowledge/practices elsewhere; either within the Helsinki media arts scene (which fortunately is known internationally for its healthy and innovative environment); further afield in the Baltic (particularly RIXC Centre for New Media Culture in Riga); or other locations within the central European network of media culture centres.

Doctoral studies in Finland are based upon independent and flexible study, and in particular art and design research at UIAH is, unlike studio-based PhD programmes in the UK, an academic degree. This means that there is the demand to gain a certain number of academic credits through research activities, before progressing to the work of the doctoral thesis dissertation. For non-Finnish speakers to gain basic research

study credits (there are almost no doctoral level courses in English at UIAH), this means that attendance to courses is dependent on what is available, and sometimes basic credits have to be negotiated as solo reading exercises. However, to be fair, there are often academic events across the local institutions in English language, and most lecturers are willing and flexible to negotiate credit accumulation by foreign students and researchers when the issue arises case-by-case.

The doctoral community of new media researchers at the Media Lab has grown over the last 3 years to be one of the largest in the world, with around 30 students. Due to the pace of graduation in the Finnish system (average 6-7 years), there are increasingly others around who share the same issues or research approaches. The doctoral programme has improved in the time I have been associated with the Lab, and gaining support and feedback among one's peers, means also giving and investing one's self wholeheartedly.

However, in parallel to the Finnish national and international situation, there is a lack of professors in-house who can supervise the students. This is particularly an issue in an emerging research field such as new media, but as a flip-side, this can also promote cross-disciplinary solutions to supervision. However, the pragmatic solution of finding supervisors is left to the research students, although they can be multiple and sought in other departments, institutions and indeed other countries.

I have been fortunate in that my quality of support has increased over time, relative to my production and arrangement of knowledge. Admittedly I have been travelling much, and my research structure has often been wayward due to the constantly shifting and emerging field in which I was researching. My Helsinki-based supervisor Lily Diaz-Kommonen, as acting professor of design for systems of representation and digital cultural heritage in the Media Lab, is also a full-time researcher, and organiser of the department's doctoral programme. She is a busy woman, hence, the type of feedback offered is mostly based (appropriately enough) in response to academic texts. Meanwhile my second supervisor, Teri Rueb, who is not based in Finland, but at Rhode Island School of Design -USA, is an internationally-practicing artist in the field of sonic/installation arts and locative media, and also an associate professor of digital media. She gives supervision in the form of regular online text/chat conversations. This complementary combination means that I benefit from different processes of input and feedback as supervision. I would recommend to all, a combination of both local and international supervision for the combined benefit of both perspectives.

2. Country of tenure

Please give some brief details about your general experiences in your country of tenure. If possible please also comment on the following: accommodation, banking arrangements, bureaucracy, arrangements for medical care. Any tips or warnings you can give will be much appreciated by future award holders.

Finland has offered itself as an excellent location for academic study as a foreigner, with flexible and independent study agreements. However, as no-one is pushing one along, this also means that the applicant

must have a large and self-replenishing supply of direction, motivation and energy. I have found further support also in the local cultural and contemporary art networks which are small, but a rather dynamic and active scene. Within the student population there are many internationals, and although Helsinki itself is not renowned as a multi-cultural city in parallel to Western European cities, it has a dynamic demographic, and multicultural activities are promoted well, both at grassroots and official levels.

It is important to find financial support in advance for post-graduate study, as unless the applicant is highly specialised in their field, there are few funding opportunities while in Finland for UK-origin researchers. Unfortunately, as a post-graduate student, there are few student benefits in terms of student accommodation, although health-care can be accessed by joining the student union for a small yearly fee [ed: this ended around 2007]. In terms of accommodation, it is necessary to find a solution in the competitive and relatively expensive private rental sector. The combination of low energy bills, with central heating and water included within rent, means that housing of better standard, and maybe cheaper, than the main cities of the UK, when all costs of living are included. Food in general (and especially ethnic foodstuffs) is more expensive in comparison to other regions of the Euro-zone.

Telecommunications (mobile telephony rather than fixed-line services) and Internet access is very flexible for the end-user, and easily accessible, with Finland being one of the most 'connected' countries in the world. Internet banking is super-modern and efficient, with the possibility to do all banking in English. This is also the case for the availability of most official information online and in personal interface. International telephony services are available, but not as cheap in comparison to western European countries with larger immigrant populations, but Internet telephony is changing this situation rapidly.

Bureaucracy in Finland can be frustrating. It is worth remembering that it is one of the most socialist countries in Europe and so has, at the time of writing [ed: 2005], a strong welfare system, which can seem cumbersome if one is at the wrong side of it. However it also has an amazingly efficient and sophisticated (almost scarily so) central information system. This means that once one is in the system, has residence status, a social security number etc., everything works super smoothly, but if not, then there can be many delays. A tight immigration policy also means that non-EU citizens encounter an increased and often troublesome bureaucracy.

The seasons of the year (including winter) are more pleasantly distinguished than western Europe, however the northern climate and seasonal pattern does affect social life, and local moods. Transitional seasons such as spring and autumn are most busy and restless, and the longer winter darkness undoubtedly can affect activity and personal mood. Summer, especially from mid-June and July to mid-August, is a time when also things can go really quiet, and people disappear from the cities to the countryside. Getting to know new people,

particularly Finns, can be easier or harder according to the time of year, and also a sense of public life accordingly. Passion and appreciation of the Northern and Eastern mind and soul will definitely help.

3. Other matters

Walking on the frozen sea, regular sauna and lakes, piercing blue eyes and large blue skies, midsummer days and mixed berries, clear honesty and negotiation skills, individual strength against the odds (sisu) and a remarkable saturation of nature, technology and connectivity, are additional matters worth mentioning.